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LATIN AMERICA, 1944

By WALTHER SCHMIDT

THE GREAT STUMBLING BLOCK

WHEN at the end of January of this year Argentina ceded to the pressure of the USA and broke off relations with Germany and Japan, Washington felt confident that Argentina's declaration of war on the Axis powers would merely be a question of time. But where the US Government had succeeded in other Latin American states as soon as it held the leading men in its hands, it failed in Argentina, not having counted upon so great a resistance arising from within the country. President Ramirez, who was willing to yield to Washington's pressure, was forced to resign and was replaced by General Edelmiro Farrell. To make matters worse, the new President was immediately recognized by Argentina's neighbors Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia, and on March 13, 1944, *Time* wrote: "The US had suffered a severe diplomatic defeat. The Argentine Government had shown real strength. Never had the US Pan-American policy been in sorer straits."

The United States immediately started applying diplomatic and economic sanctions. England, although later recalling her Ambassador from Buenos Aires, showed great reluctance in following suit, never applying economic sanctions to the same extent as the USA. The reasons for this are fairly obvious. First of all, England has always been Argentina's best customer for agricultural supplies and needs them today more than ever. And secondly, England wielded considerable influence in most South American countries before the present war, having large investments especially in Argentina. Now she is seeing herself ousted by the USA from one country after another and wishes at least to retain a foothold in Argentina in order to safeguard an opening for her postwar trade to South America. Naturally she is at cross-purposes in this with the USA, who wishes to eliminate all European influence, including that of England and the Soviet Union, from Latin America.

For the United States, Argentina represents the key to the final settling of her Latin American policy. Not until this fortress of resistance, to which the eyes of all the other South American states are turned, has fallen, can Washington speak of a victory of its Latin American policy. At a moment when American forces are fighting fierce battles thousands of kilometers away, Washington must do everything in its power to keep South America in line with its plans, economic as well as political. If, nevertheless, it has not taken recourse to the last resort of direct military intervention in Argentina, this is probably to be explained by the fact that such a step would jeopardize its thesis of Pan-American solidarity which it has been preaching for years in support of its Latin American policy.

HULL VS. WELLES

The former Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles is generally regarded as a great expert on Latin America, especially on the psychology of its peoples. Since he was forced out of office, he has not ceased to raise his voice in warning and to point to the example of Argentina to show how dangerous it is to try and force a policy or a government upon another American nation. Sumner Welles is the real creator of

Argentina's Brigadier General Luis César Perlinger, eagle-beaked, supernationalist Minister of the Interior, swung a haymaker at able US Ambassador Norman Armour. Said Perlinger: "It is not possible to smile at an Ambassador of a country which does not maintain relations with the owner of the house. I am the first to assume an angry face toward such a man, and every Argentine must do the same."

This was a diplomatic insult to which the US State Department had no ready reply. In all its implications, it was also a chilly lesson in the nature of the hostilities and problems which now are facing the US in much of Latin America.

The cold fact is that a great many Argentines applauded General Perlinger. His slap at the Yankee Ambassador was good politics.

(*Time*, April 10, 1944.)

The Argentine policy of the last few years, whether actually influenced by military cliques or not, has demonstrated clearly enough that its aggressive nationalism has two aims: leadership in South America and independence from North America. At the moment, for various reasons, nationalists of undeniable pro-Axis inclination have the upper hand in Buenos Aires. Although they may well be ousted one day, they will only be replaced by men professing an equally expansive and hence aggressive nationalism. The supporters of an uncompromising Pan-American collaboration will probably always be in the minority . . . It is not difficult to predict that in the near future and in the period following immediately upon the war Latin America will not be spared political and especially social upheavals and that the struggle for political leadership in the Western Hemisphere will flare up again among the various Latin American states themselves as well as between Latin America and the USA.

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the "Good Neighbor" policy, which he propagated on several trips to South America and at the Pan-American congresses. Many leading men south of the Rio Grande are his personal friends. Although the "Good Neighbor" slogan also only served to cover up the attempt to bring the Latin American states under the hegemony of the USA, Sumner Welles at least did not employ the brutal methods Cordell Hull uses. And it is Hull who has prevailed.

Sumner Welles can point to the fact that developments in South America have not taken the turn expected in Washington from the application of means of diplomatic pressure. Indeed, the opposite has been the result, a kind of solidarity among the South American states. One can almost speak of a secret defensive bloc becoming discernible under the leadership of Argentina, especially in the southern part of the continent, including Bolivia. Common race, common historical traditions, common culture and religion, and finally common economic interests, form the basis of this solidarity. Washington may have been strong enough to force one South American state after another to break off relations with the Axis. But Washington's power did not suffice to persuade Chileans, Bolivians, Paraguayans, or even such countries as Uruguay and Brazil, to turn upon their Argentine brothers. Quite recently, Gonzales, a member of the Chilean Parliament, declared: "All Latin America must stand together to maintain itself against the imperialistic powers." Similar voices have also been heard from other parts of South

America. For, by its treatment of Argentina, Washington has shown that it lacks the ability to lead the Western Hemisphere in any other way than by force.

VOICES AT HOME

In the United States, too, the misunderstandings and disharmony between the USA and her southern neighbors have been pointed out. *Time* wrote:

"The quarrel with Argentina is one of the saddest failures of US diplomacy. Argentina is more like the US than is any other Latin American nation. It is rich, developed, modern . . . There is no good reason why the two countries should not be friends.

There are many bad reasons, most of them stemming from the tendency of US diplomacy to lump all Latin American nations together, treat them alike as backward children who have to be bribed with financial candy or ruled with an iron (though palsied and clumsy) hand. This policy works with some of the weakest and smallest, though it never works very well and ill becomes the great Good Neighbor. With Argentina it does not work at all.

The Argentines expect to be treated as equals. Failing to receive such treatment, many have turned to defiance. Their wounded national pride has soured to hostile nationalism . . . Argentina is too big, too rich, too proud to yield to loans, Lend-Lease, trade favors or other forms of collective bribery.

More recently, the well-known American columnist Marquis Childs openly accused the Government of having, by its loan policy, undermined the economic structure

The US lost another Good Neighbor, Argentina gained another satellite.

Paraguay had followed Bolivia into totalitarian, anti-US Argentina's growing bloc. The change in Foreign Minister signaled a complete and picturesque alteration. Stocky President Higinio Morínigo (about whom his mother is to have remarked: "If I had known he was going to be President, I would have sent him to school") had long teetered on the fence between Argentina and the US. Short time ago the *Frente de Guerra* (War Front), a pro-Argentine group of Army officers, decided that he had perched there long enough. Led by hatchet-faced Colonel Benítez Vera, the 3,000-man garrison of Campo Grande set out for the center of Asunción, a few miles away, riding in Lend-Lease jeeps and trucks, guarded by Lend-Lease airplanes. President Morínigo met them, yielded to their demands.

Immediate result was Paraguay's recognition of Argentina's President Edelmiro Farrell. Foreign Minister Luis Argaña and two other pro-US Ministers in Morínigo's Cabinet were allowed to stay a short time, but last week they were fired. Morínigo became an army-bossed puppet.

(*Time*, April 3, 1944.)

of the Latin American countries. The result, he said, was inflation, economic difficulties, and consequently general discontent among the masses.

ECONOMICS AND A NEW INFLUENCE

The economic chaos ruling throughout Latin America is to be traced to the fact that all the states are more or less cut off from the outside world, i.e., chiefly from Europe. The European markets supplied machinery, manufactured goods, and all that was lacking in Latin America owing to the absence of industry. On the other hand, Europe was Central and South America's best customer for native products. Today, all Latin America is dependent almost exclusively on the USA as a trade partner. Even England has had greatly to reduce her important prewar trade, which went most of all to the southern parts of the continent. Consequently, the Latin American states are becoming more and more dependent on their great neighbor in the north, a fact which the latter has not failed to exploit for his political purposes.

Nevertheless, the USA is not alone in dominating the political situation in Latin America; for in political respects the United States must reckon on her own continent with the Soviet Union, although the latter has practically no economic interests in the Central and South American countries. There can be no doubt that some of the events occurring sporadically in the Latin American countries during the last year or so are to be traced to Communist machinations. Washington is looking on with anxiety while unrest, revolts, strikes, are breaking out under influences beyond its control in countries urgently required as war-essential

centers of supply. But there are two reasons forcing the US Government to close its eyes to these machinations: first, its relations with Moscow, and secondly its belief that some of these machinations can be made to serve its own purposes. Thus, for instances, the subversive activities of the Communists in Argentina were welcomed by Washington in its fight against the Farrell Government, without quite realizing how dangerous this playing with fire was.

The tendency to interpret a *Putsch* or change of regime in South America solely from the point of view of whether the instigators are for or against the Allies has caused a lot of harm; for the political structure of the Latin American states is far too complicated and too varied for such events to be judged by so simple a standard. Brazil offers a good example. As a belligerent power, Brazil is fighting against Fascism and National Socialism and is supporting the ideas of the Atlantic Charter and of Pan-American co-operation. In domestic politics, however, the regime of President Vargas is pronouncedly "Fascist," for the theories of the *Estado Novo* are inseparable from the totalitarian patterns in Europe. Vargas went even further than Salazar in Portugal by destroying the federal structure of the United States of Brazil and creating a centralized state. The methods of government are dictatorial, and it is obvious that the propaganda apparatus, which completely dominates, is finding it difficult to explain the double face of Brazil's policy.

(*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, July 28, 1944.)

An indication of Moscow's growing influence in Latin America is given by the declaration of the President of the Latin American Workers' Union, Lombardo Toledano, last October at the International Workers' Conference in Canada to the effect that many Latin American countries had fallen or were still falling victim to US imperialism. Hitherto, Toledano had been an enthusiastic champion of the policy of the United States.

TRADITIONAL POLITICAL TURBULENCE

The events in Bolivia which were introduced by the overthrow of pro-Washington President Peñaranda in December 1943 also point to the influence of Communist elements. Peñaranda was replaced by Gualberto Villaroel, but several attempts were made by Leftist circles to oust him again. Finally, Washington, which is vitally interested in Bolivia's tin production, recognized Villaroel, and last August the latter had himself confirmed by legal election.

Apart from Argentina and Bolivia, there have hardly been any events of far-reaching

Gregori Fedorovitch Rezanov, the Soviet Union's first Minister to Colombia, got an unhappy welcome when he arrived at the Bogotá airport. Because of a Foreign Office bungle, no Colombian dignitaries met him. Uninvited local Communists infested the airport, carried his baggage, muscled into his news pictures, acutely embarrassed Mr. Rezanov. The Bogotá press was generally cordial. Privately, Colombians wondered why the new Russian Legation had a staff of 31 while Colombia was represented at Moscow by a single, lonely Minister. Probable reason: the Soviet Union wants to train diplomats for use in other Latin American countries which may recognize it eventually. (The USSR is recognized by Mexico, Colombia, Cuba, Uruguay. Friendly gestures have been made by Brazil and Chile.) As yet, Minister Rezanov and most of his staff speak no Spanish.

(*Time*, February 8, 1944.)

political significance in the other South American countries during the course of this year. Unrest in Ecuador in May; a *coup d'état* in Peru in January; a military revolt and an attempt to depose President Lopez in Colombia; political conflicts in Chile; border disputes between Ecuador and Peru—all these are part and parcel of customary Latin American politics. But the resignation of the Brazilian Foreign Minister Oswaldo Aranha deserves attention. Aranha was an obedient follower of the USA and smoothed the path for Washington in Brazil; in summer, however, there were grave differences of opinion between him and the American Ambassador in Rio de Janeiro. The reason for these differences has not yet become known. Possibly Aranha refused to participate in the anti-Argentine policy of the USA.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Central America suffered from violent revolutionary unrest during the last few months.

It cannot be said as yet that order has been finally restored in those countries. Of the so-called dictators ruling for years with Washington's permission and with a firm hand in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, only Somoza in Nicaragua and Carias in Honduras have been able to maintain themselves, while Ubico in Guatemala and Martinez in El Salvador have had to leave the field in the course of the year. However, according to the latest reports, the days of power of Carias and Somoza, who are also confronted with great difficulties just now, seem to be numbered too.

Washington can hardly be interested at present in such unstable conditions unless it is aiming at a reunion of all of Central America into a federation. There are several indications that the Soviet Minister Umansky in Mexico has had a hand in these events, but whether with or without Washington's approval cannot yet be ascertained.

GESAROL—NEOCID—DDT

By R. WIESMANN

The war being waged at present among men all over the world has not put a stop to another struggle; man's war with the insects. The curious title to this article stands for a new weapon that has been developed within the last few years for the latter war. Perhaps the author, a Swiss, is a little too enthusiastic in his description. For "Time" in its issue of June 12, 1944, writes under the heading "Beetle Blaster": "DDT is not a kill-all. Against two of the most common US crop destroyers, the Mexican bean beetle and the cotton boll weevil, DDT has proved a disappointment." Yet the new discovery undoubtedly merits attention.

UNTIL recently, the most popular insecticides were arsenic compounds—lead arsenate and calcium arsenate—which, however, are poisonous to all living creatures. Hence there have long been endeavors to replace lead arsenate—which, although effective, has many hygienic drawbacks—by nonpoisonous substances. Nicotine derris and pyrethrum were unsuited wherever prolonged effectiveness was required. Moreover, no insecticides of lasting effectiveness against mosquitoes, lice, and especially flies were known until recently. Just after the outbreak of war, however, a Swiss firm succeeded in producing an insecticide known as "Gesarol" which, although extremely toxic to insects, is harmless to human beings and domestic animals. This quickly led to the production of other insecticides known under the collective name of "Neocid" or "DDT," which have acquired tremendous importance.

It took many years to achieve this result. Some ten years ago, after a few vague initial experiments, a small group of chemists began a systematic study of the problem. After four years of hard work, the practical solution to the first task they had set themselves was found: a new moth-proofing compound called "Mitin." Mitin is a product not only of toxicological work but of dyestuff chemistry as well, and it may be regarded as a colorless, water-soluble dye with a toxic effect upon moths. Wool impregnated with it is mothproof for ever, as Mitin is impervious to light, to washing, and to hard rubbing. The next step was to isolate the nonwater-soluble toxic component from the chemical structure of the new product and examine it for its utility as a plant insecticide. What the chemists wanted to find was an insecticide similar to those produced by nature herself (pyrethrine, rotenone, etc.) but impervious to light